

LETTER

TO THE RABBLES,

Who rob the FARMERS of their CORN.

Mr. M O B,

I Shall not long insist upon the Reasons, why Corn is at present at so high a Price, but shall only touch upon some material Particulars, viz. The small Remainder of Stock from former Years, when the last Harvest was gathered in.—The heavy Rains which spoiled great Part of the forward Wheat, and the latter Rains which rotted to Dung our late Oats and Barley. The actual Scantiness of the Crop itself, which in many Places turned out not half its usual Product. The Corn sown again in the Fields to produce you a future Subsistence, where the Consumption must be as great as usual. The Corn you have fed upon for these Eight Months past, which was sold at a very moderate Price, considering the melancholy Pittance of the last Harvest.—I will now mention some Precautions taken for your Relief: A Stop put to the Distillery, which has already raised the Price of Spirits from Six Shillings and Six-pence to Eleven Shillings per Gallon. Our Ships dispatched all over *Europe* in search for Corn, and even to *America*, to supply your Wants. These and many more Reasons might be urged in a stronger Manner, to convince you of the great Scarcity of Corn in this Kingdom; but Prejudice is Proof against all Conviction, and you pretend there must be a Confederacy of the Farmers to raise the Price, and famish the Poor.

THE Folly of this Imputation on the Farmers, a Moment's Pause of Thought will shew:—Monopolies are justly reputed to have a dangerous Tendency towards Imposition, and are therefore discountenanced by every wise Government, and especially our own; for which Reason en-

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grossing of Corn is particularly guarded against by Act of Parliament ; but when once any Commodity is in many Hands, we are secure from Imposition.——The Interest of one Man differs from that of another.——He must convert this Stock into some other.——He has Demands for Money : Or he foresees the Season of a succeeding Crop approaching which will lessen the Value of his present Stock. These and many other Inducements bring the Commodity to Market, when according to its Plenty or Scarcity, it is cheap or dear ; and it is not in the Power of the wealthiest Merchant, or most contriving Tradesman to occasion more than a slight and momentary Influence on the Price of Things, when Numbers are concerned : Daily and constant Experience shews this to be a Truth.——Yet, what the richest Merchants, and cunningest Shopkeepers can't effect, you wildly imagine the Farmers can bring to pass, who are the most numerous of any Body of Dealers in this Kingdom, and scattered all over *England*, without any great Stock of Money or Credit, without Correspondence, and utterly unknown to one another in the Way of Traffick, beyond the Compass of Fifteen or Twenty Miles.——But there is one Thing which will not only produce Dearthness, but a Famine, if there is not an immediate Stop to it ; and that is, YOUR CONFEDERACY, Mr. Mob, whoever reflects at all, must be satisfied that our wet Soils, in which we mostly abound, are unfit for Tillage, and are therefore set apart for Pasture of Cattle ; we don't raise a sufficient Quantity of Corn to support our own Inhabitants, and are forced to be supplied from other Places at a Distance. Under such Circumstances, if you think fit to tell the Seller what Price he shall be bound to take for his own Goods, what will be the Consequence ? The Farmer will no longer come to your Markets, but will go where he can be safe of Protection and fair Treatment ; or will bury his Corn in Chests under-ground, in Expectation of better Times.——But, say you, we will go to the Farmers Houses, plunder them of the Corn which is thresh'd, and set their Ricks and Houses on Fire. This, I understand, is your Language, and after what you have done (I don't question either your Folly or Villany) but the little Stock of Corn in this Part of *Somersetshire* will soon be consumed ; and what then will be your Fate ? Do you think People will buy Wheat for you at Thirteen, Fourteen, or Fifteen Shillings a Bushel, and sell it you afterwards for Ten or Five Shillings ; or whatever you please to give ? What then must be the End of this Madness ? But that, you, who escape the Gun, the Scythe, the Pitchfork, of the Farmer will perish by Hunger in a Ditch, from a Famine of your own creating.——There is one Thing more, worthy the Attention of wiser Heads than yours ; every Man of Judgment knows, that Dearthness produces the same Frugality and Management in a State, as is practis'd on board a Ship, when, thro' many Misadventures Provisions begin to fail, the Sailors are put upon short Allowance.——If we should be unwiser than they, and empty all our little Stores at once, our Neighbours the *Dutch*, and other Foreigners, would take the Advantage, and sell to us at what exorbitant monstrous Price they pleas'd ; which besides the starving of Thousands, would be such a Stab to Commerce, that *England* would feel it for Years and Years to come.——But, I fear, it is lost Labour to use any Arguments not suited to your Passions.——Besides your Prejudices, you must give up the darling Love of Plunder ; the Joy of revenging yourselves on every one you dislike ; and the transporting Delight of trampling upon the Laws of your Country,



try, and setting all Mankind upon a savage Level.—These Things have so many prevailing Charms with you, that it would be in vain attempting to awaken your Conscience or your Reason.—I will, therefore, only point out some Events, which if you are uppermost, will certainly come to pass: In doing this, it will not be possible to aggravate Matters, for no Mob was ever yet triumphant, who did not act over anew all Manner of Villany, that ever blackened the Annals of Time. I must suppose you then, not taken and hanged in the first Instance, but imagine you Victorious, after a great many Murders, for the Farmers will not part with their Properties, but with their Lives, you shall be in Possession of all the Corn you have not set in Flames, which by your prudent Management may last you about a *Week*: This indeed is no mighty Concern of yours, for it is impossible your Reign should continue so long.—And now, your first Adversaries are subdued, Inspectors are appointed to enquire into the Abuses of former Times.—Cheese is found to be too dear, and the bloody Order is immediately sent forth, Let all the Cheese Lofts of the few surviving Farmers be ransacked for the common Good, and all rebellious Resisters or knavish Concealers of their Goods be put to Death.—Meat likewise is at an extravagant Price: Let the Butcher answer for it, let him die the Death of his own Cattle, and be his Flesh confiscated.—As you are Lords of all, the Inspectors will observe, that your shabby tatter'd Garments ill suit your present Grandeur. Drapers, Mercers, and other Tradesmen have in their Shops what will equip you to a Hair.—No sanguinary Measures need here be used: They must be gratefully sensible of your Favours in lessening the Price of Corn, and you may take their Goods at whatever Rate you please: If the Ingrates are refractory, you know how to punish their Disobedience. But all this Time Money is wanting, which, they say, is the Soul of Power: Go to the reputed money'd Men, search all their Coffers, and put them to the Torture to discover their hidden Treasures.—And now, Mr. *Mob*, you are at the Height of your Ambition; the Measure of your Iniquity is full; and the Day of Reckoning is come.—The Government alarmed at your Villanies, Rapes, Murders, Treason, (and at the lamentable Remissness of those in whom the Laws were subordinately entrusted) prepares to take due Vengeance of your Crimes. Your Resistance and your Flight are vain: Some of you are hang'd in Chains; some given to the Surgeons to be anotamiz'd; some by the Mercy of the Judge meet a gentler Punishment; and a few of the least Criminal are pardon'd on their turning Evidence against the rest.—There, Mr. *Mob*, will be your memorable Exploits. This your tragical End, to which every surviving Farmer will undoubtedly pursue you; and know to your utter Confusion, that there is not an active Robber among you, whose Name, and Place of Abode we are unacquainted with; your Stature, Age, Make, Features are so particularly described; that, fly to what Part of *England* you will, you cannot escape the Hands of Justice.—I shall conclude with this Warning to you, the GREATEST DELINQUENTS; That, if the Mischief you have set on Foot, proceeds no farther, if Peace and Order are restored, and the Laws of the Land are no longer in Danger to be violated, possibly, offended Justice may relent, and instead of capital Punishment, be satisfied with some mild Correction, or appeas'd by a sincere Contrition for your Fault: Otherwise be assured, That as you have been the horrid Instruments to kindle Sedition in your Country, so your Lives are already forfeited

forfeited to the Laws, which upon any further Disturbance or Confusion, will no Doubt be strictly and severely requir'd at your Hands.

THESE are my Sentiments, and all my Brother-Farmers concur with me, who from our Hearts sincerely pity the Distresses of the real Poor; but hold all lazy, impudent, rapacious Ruffians, in the highest Contempt, Detestation and Defiance.



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